

Appl. No. 09/939,163
Amdt. Dated December 30, 2003
Reply to Office Action of October 3, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A body fluid absorbent panel for a sanitary wearing article comprising a fibrous web having a compression resilience, said fibrous web comprising a plurality of openings extending therethrough in a direction of a thickness of the fibrous web, and barriers surrounding and defining said openings,

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said barriers comprising a shape holding layer formed from a plurality of thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers that are hot welded together at contact points between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers so as to resist collapsing under pressure and a body fluid retaining layer placed upon one of an upper surface and a lower surface of said shape holding layer and formed from a plurality of thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers which are mixed with an absorbent material, material and are hot welded together at contact points between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers so as to resist collapsing under pressure, said shape holding layer and said body fluid retaining layers having patterned surface areas that surface pattern configurations defined by the barriers and exclusive of said openings which surface pattern configurations are substantially coextensive,

said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said shape holding layer being hot welded

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together at contact points thereof in said shape holding layer,

said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded together at contact points thereof in said body fluid retaining layer, and

said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said shape holding layer and said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded to each other along an interface at contact points of said shape holding layer and said body fluid retaining layer.

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Claim 2 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein said absorbent material comprises a hot weldable high absorbent polymer component in the form of at least one of high absorption polymer particles and a plurality of liquid-absorbent fibers made of high absorption polymer, said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said body fluid retaining layer and said high absorbent polymer component being hot welded together at contact points thereof in said body fluid retaining layer and said synthetic resin fibers of said shape holding layer and said high absorbent polymer component of said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded together at contact points thereof along said interface of said shape holding layer and said body fluid retaining layer.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein said barriers comprises a plurality of first barriers extending in parallel to and spaced apart from one another in a first direction and a plurality of second barriers extending in parallel to and spaced apart from one another in a second direction intersecting said first barriers and each of the openings is

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defined by a pair of adjacent first barriers and a pair of adjacent second barriers intersecting a pair of adjacent first barriers.

Claim 4 (previously presented) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, comprising at least two of said panels which are placed upon each other in a thickness direction so that openings formed in an upper one of said two panels are divided by at least in two sections by barriers formed in a panel immediately underlying said upper one of said two panels.

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Claim 5 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein an open area ratio of said openings to said panel is in a range of from about 20 to about 80% and a total area of said openings is in a range of from about 10 to about 1600 mm².

Claim 6 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein a compression resilience of said barriers is in a range of from about 20 to about 80%.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein a ratio between said shape holding layer and said body fluid retaining layer with respect to a dimension of said barriers as measured in its thickness direction is in a range of 6:4 to 8:2.

Claim 8 (original): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein the body fluid absorbent layer contains a plurality of cellulose fibers.

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Claim 9 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein a mat-like liquid-absorbent core substantially without any openings is provided on a lower surface of said panel.

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Claim 10 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 4, wherein an open area ratio of said openings to said panel is in a range of from about 20 to about 80% and a total area of said openings is in a range of from about 10 to about 1600 mm² and wherein a total area of said openings in said upper panel are less than or equal to a total area of said openings in the panel immediately underlying said upper panel.

Claim 11 (previously presented) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, further comprising a lower surface that is a mat-like liquid-absorbent core substantially without any openings.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein said shape holding layer comprises a liquid-permeable material.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A body fluid absorbent panel for a sanitary wearing article comprising a fibrous web having a compression resilience, said fibrous web comprising a plurality of

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openings extending therethrough in a direction of a thickness of the fibrous web, and barriers surrounding and defining said openings,

01 said barriers comprising a shape holding layer formed from a plurality of thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers that are hot welded together at contact points between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers so as to resist collapsing under pressure and a body fluid retaining layer placed upon one of an upper surface and a lower surface of said shape holding layer and formed from a plurality of thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers which are mixed with an absorbent material, material and are hot welded together at contact points between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers so as to resist collapsing under pressure, said shape holding layer surrounding peripheral edges of each of the plurality of openings,

said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said shape holding layer being hot welded together at contact points thereof in said shape holding layer,

said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded together at contact points thereof in said body fluid retaining layer, and

said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said shape holding layer and said thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded to each other along an interface at contact points of said shape holding layer and said body fluid retaining layer.